



NEWS RELEASE

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Small Business Week Award Winners Honored

LOS ANGELES – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) today announced the Los Angeles District Office winners of their annual Small Business Week Awards competition co-sponsored by the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce in the L.A. region. The Los Angeles SBA Office covers Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties.

The Awards will be presented to the Small Business Person of the Year, Small Business Exporter of the Year, and the Jeffrey Butland Family-Owned Business of the Year, as well as Champions in eleven small business advocacy categories at the SBA's 27th Annual Small Business Week Awards Ceremony to be held from 10:30 A.M. to Noon on Wednesday, June 4th at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles. The celebration includes a luncheon buffet, including Dodger Dogs, a Chavez Ravine nacho bar, popcorn, peanuts and cracker jacks, along with various other dishes. Ticket allows entrance to the Los Angeles Dodgers vs. the Colorado Rockies game that begins at 12:10 PM. This event represents the combined effort of the SBA and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, with outstanding support for the event rendered by the Southland's SBA Lending Community.

“We are extremely proud of our 2008 winners,” said Alberto G. Alvarado, Los Angeles SBA District Director. “We applaud these entrepreneurs and their commitment to reach the top of their field. Their success is the result of indomitable spirit, unflinching commitment and a focused drive. We are truly honored to present the best of the best in the Los Angeles area.”

“Small businesses are a key driver of our local economy,” said Gary Toeppen, President & CEO, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce. “The L.A. Area Chamber is proud to serve small businesses, and we applaud this year’s award winners for their contributions to our communities and economy.”

The 2008 Los Angeles District winners are Small Business Person of the Year, Dante O. Cardenas of E.D. Produce, Inc; Small Business Exporter of the Year, Marie Spaccarotella of Ziello Labs; Family-Owned Business of the Year, Noemi Prado of Southwest Moulding; and Financial Services Champion of the Year, Tim Weaver of Celtic Bank.

Additional winners include Home-Based Business Champion, Jackie Jones of Pacific Asian Consortium (PACE); Minority Small Business Champion, Maria Acosta of Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA); Small Business Journalist of the Year, Daniel Kehrer of Business.com; Veteran Small Business Champion, Coreen A. Conley of the Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC); Woman in Business Champion, Laura Yamanaka of teamCFO; Young Entrepreneur of the Year, Kyle Banfield of Cool It Portable Air Conditioning; SBDC Service Center Excellence & Innovation Award, Alex Vaughn, Director of El Camino College (Small Business Development Center), and our National Award Winners, Dwight D. Eisenhower Award for Excellence (Research and Development), Tom May of the Supplier Diversity Program, Jet Propulsion Laboratory/National Aeronautics and Space Administration (JPL/NASA); Large 7a Lender of the Year, Min Jung Kim of NARA Bank; and the Leadership in Inner City Lending Award, John Lu of Pacific City Bank.

The SBA Small Business Person of the Year is Dantee Cardenas of E.D. Produce Inc. which was incorporated in 2003 as a wholesaler/distributor of seasonal fresh produce with Persian cucumbers being the principal product. The business imports its fresh, seasonal produce from Dantee Cardenas’ family-owned farms in Mexico by way of family-owned trucks on a daily basis to the company’s warehouse in the heart of Downtown Los Angeles’ produce district. To increase its margins, Cardenas began selling directly to end buyers rather than going through brokers. The strategy has proven successful as the business reaped the benefits of greater net profitability. Today, 85

percent of E.D. Produce products are Persian cucumbers. The business is known as the “King of Persian Cucumbers” and captures approximately 75 percent of the market share in Los Angeles and surrounding areas. Cardenas obtained a U.S. Small Business Administration loan in July 2007 for the purchase of the warehouse E.D. Produce currently occupies.

The SBA Small Business Exporter of the Year is Marie Spaccarotella of Ziello Labs. In December 2005, Marie Spaccarotella and two partners started Mago Skin Care, an athletic skin care company. Mago made skin care products—sun screen, after sun gel and anti-friction products—for three ultra marathon runners featured in an expedition across the Sahara Desert in “Running the Sahara,” a documentary filmed by Matt Damon. Mago also created a face cream, hydrating body spray, a fine line tightener and under eye products. In April 2007, Mago was approached with an exporting opportunity by an independent contractor to manufacture private label products for a trading company in the Middle East. Spaccarotella pursued the contract after teaming up with a new partner and forming Ziello Labs. After contacting the California Centers for International Trade Development (CITD) for guidance, Spaccarotella pursued the opportunity. The products and labeling are in formula and final design and have been preliminarily approved by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia International Conformity Certificate Program. The first two products—there are eight in total—were submitted by the importer to the Saudi Ministry of Health and are awaiting approval.

The SBA Jeffry Butland Family Owned Business of the Year is Noemi Prado of Southwest Moulding formerly Southwest Mill and Lumber. The company was started in 1978 as a building supply company manufacturing window frames and door studs. The company transformed itself into a frame manufacturer 10 years later to respond to the need for board length molding from the frame distribution and jobber sector. Long-time employee Noemi Prado, who worked at Southwest Moulding since she was 17-years-old, subsequently bought the business from the original owners who retired. Prado worked at Southwest Moulding for 27 years before taking over. Among its 42 employees, 15 are Prado family member, including her son and daughter. Since taking ownership of the business, Prado has continued to look for ways to create measured growth for Southwest. Recently she diversified the company’s product line to include shelves and visited China to explore expanding business opportunities.

The SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year is Kyle Banfield of Cool It Portable Air Conditioning. As a student at California State University, Long Beach, Kyle worked at a portable air conditioning unit company as an HVAC service technician delivering and

installing various types of portable units to various sites. Promoted to area/manager foreman he helped the company open a new office in Dallas, Texas. After several years Banfield got the entrepreneurial itch and decided he wanted to be his “own boss.” The 28-year-old started his Lakewood business, Cool It Portable Air conditioning, with the assistance of the U.S. Small Business Administration’s loan program. Banfield’s company provides portable air conditioners used for a wide range of applications including computer rooms, server rooms, heat-sensitive equipment, hospitals, warehouses and exhibit booths. Cool It offers both air conditioning and heating.

The Financial Services Champion of the Year is Celtic Bank. Timothy L. Weaver has worked for 25 years for the benefit of the small business owners by supplying financial assistance and technical expertise to all levels of enterprises. During his career, Weaver has sponsored and obtained the approval of SBA guaranteed loans for more than 1,000 loans totaling about \$175 million. During Weaver’s lending career, 50% of his SBA clients have been to women owned businesses and 25% to minority firms. Weaver received the Los Angeles SBA District Office’s prestigious MED Week 2002 Emerging Markets Spirit Award, which recognizes efforts in lending to Emerging Markets or Disadvantaged Businesses. Weaver distinguished himself by submitting and approving the second SBA Patriot Express loan in the United States in June 2007.

The SBA Home Based Business Champion of the Year is Jackie Jones of Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment (PACE). Ms. Jones is director of the SBA Women’s Business Center at PACE’s Business Development Center, which is in its 15th year of providing financial and educational assistance to local small businesses. Jones joined PACE in 2004 and has been at the forefront of serving low-income entrepreneurs in Los Angeles ever since. She provides innovative business training, one-on-one business consulting and access to capital. Her specialties include business strategy, marketing and market research. Jones oversees the administration of the SBA Women’s Business Center and the Los Angeles Business Assistance Program (LABAP) funded by the Community Development Department Center of the City of Los Angeles. She also oversees PACE Business Development Center’s Entrepreneurial training Program, which provides prospective entrepreneurs with the educational tools necessary for business success. Jones created and managed a volunteer consultant program that recruits talented business professionals who contribute to community development by using their skills to help advance small businesses.

The SBA Minority Small Business Champion of the Year is Marie Acosta of the U.S. Department of Commerce of the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA). Ms.

Acosta has more than 20 years of federal government service and more than 15 years experience in the private sector, in senior managerial positions. She is currently the Los Angeles Area District Manager for MBDA and is responsible for the management and monitoring of numerous funded projects in the region. Acosta's background is in financing, accounting and management. She has single-handedly guided the ascendancy of many area small and minority businesses. Acosta is well known by federal, state and city government officials, as well as in the echelon of the financial and business sectors. Ms. Acosta is quoted frequently in the Los Angeles Times, and La Opinión, for example and has lectured at Santa Barbara University on business mergers and acquisitions.

The SBA Small Business Journalist of the Year is Daniel Kehrer of Business.Com, Inc/Work.com. Daniel is editor of Work.Com, which publishes original How-To Guides for small business on thousands of management, financial technology, legal, government, HR and related topics. Work.com is America's fastest growing online community for small business, and is a place where business owners, entrepreneurs and other small business experts exchange ideas on today's best business solutions. Kehrer is also editor of Business.com, the parent company of Work.com, and the world's leading business search engine serving more than 30 million business users monthly. He also edits the weekly Work.com Small Business Newsletter What Works. Kehrer has nearly 25 years experience as a business and financial journalist, publishing executive, magazine and online editor, columnist, author and entrepreneur in New York, Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles. He writes a nationally-syndicated weekly business column known for its accessible style and hands-on solutions for business owners and startup entrepreneurs. His columns also appear in the Business Advice Center on Business.com.

The SBA Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year is Coreena A. Conley of the Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC). Ms. Conley has 15 years senior management expertise in financial and business management, economic and community development, banking, lending, real estate, government, academia and the non-profit sector. Conley currently serves as the director of the Veterans Business Outreach Center providing administration oversight for a statewide economic development initiative serving California and Nevada. She provides financial and risk management, forecasting, cost reporting, cash flow analysis, business development and planning. Conley administers grant writing and contract management oversight and designs and implements educational programs. Conley has successfully owned and operated her own business infrastructures and managed banking centers and divisions at major financial institutions.

The SBA Women in Business Champion of the Year is Laura Yamanaka, the president and co-founder of teamCFO. Yamanaka partners with small and midsize businesses to improve company performance and growth by providing quality financial accounting consulting services. TeamCFO designs cash management systems that monitor their client's cash position and maximize cash flow through ongoing cash flow analysis, and effective cash conservation practices. Before founding teamCFO with colleague Carrie Hidding, Yamanaka had more than eight years experience with PricewaterhouseCoopers and Ernst & Young where she managed a diverse portfolio of clients and provided services including audit, mergers and acquisitions, litigation support, IPO and SEC projects and filing. Laura's extensive experience in the corporate world was an ideal training ground for learning the skills needed assist small and mid-sized businesses transform their financial operations from cost centers to profit support centers. Ms. Yamanaka also leads and supports women in business as the president of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) Los Angeles chapter and serves on NAWBO's National Advisory Council, a select advisory group which supports the NAWBO National Board of Directors.

The SBA SBDC Service Center Excellence & Innovation Award is awarded to El Camino College (ECC) Small Business Development Center (SBDC), a non-profit organization - hosted by El Camino College and funded by the SBA - is located at the El Camino College Business Training Center (BTC) in Hawthorne, California. The SBDC, headed by Alex Vaughn has actively participated in the design and delivery of economic and business development programs for small businesses since 1992, and has been a service center for the newly formed Los Angeles SBDC Network since 2006. During 2007, the ECC SBDC provided one-on-one counseling services to 784 clients of who 593 were new clients and conducted 157 training events and conferences during which 1524 entrepreneurs and business owners were educated on topics of interest to small businesses. The ECC SBDC assisted 16 clients with starting new businesses, and assisted 20 clients with SBA and conventional loans and credit lines.

The SBA National Dwight D. Eisenhower Award for Excellence (Research and Development) is presented to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), (with its budget of \$1.6 billion and 5,000 employees), a leading research and development center for NASA and a division of the California Institute of Technology. Since 1959, JPL has led the world in exploring the solar system's planets with robotic spacecrafts. For 20 years the Business Opportunities Office and Supplier Diversity Program at JPL, headed by Tom May, has been instrumental in successfully matching small and large companies by

making opportunities accessible to the small business community, and lobbying for higher small business subcontracting goals and for increased small business set-asides. The SBA National Award to the Large SBA 7(a) Lender of the Year winner is Nara Bank, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Nara Bancorp, Inc. and was founded in 1989 as a community bank serving the Korean-American community in Southern California. Since its inception, the bank has grown nationwide to have offices in major cities throughout the United States. Nara Bank services customers of diverse ethnic backgrounds with a complete line of banking products including commercial real estate loans, SBA loans and international trade finance. Nara Bank has historically been one of SBA's top producing 7(a) lenders in the Los Angeles District Office. The bank strives to provide competitive and business-oriented financial services and products through their growing nationwide network.

Finally, the SBA National Award for Leadership in Inner City Lending recipient is Pacific City Bank (PCB), a California State-chartered bank which began operations on September 18, 2003 with a mission to be the premier community bank in Southern California. The bank was founded by a group of individuals with extensive community banking experience and ties to the local business community. The bank has experienced tremendous growth since opening and currently has seven branch offices throughout the Greater Los Angeles area and five out-of-state loan production offices. The bank is committed to providing their customers with the highest level of personalized service and quality financial solutions and building genuine and lasting relationships with their customers and the local business community. PCB continues to be a top SBA producer of loans to emerging market business owners. The bank is a full-service commercial bank with its head office located in the Mid-Wilshire area of Los Angeles.

2008 SMALL BUSINESS WEEK AWARD WINNERS

AWARD	WINNERS
Small Business Person of the Year	Dantee O. Cardenas E. D. Produce, Inc
Financial Services Advocate	Tim Weaver Celtic Bank
Home Based Business Advocate	Jackie Jones PACE

Minority Small Business Advocate	Maria Acosta MBDA
Veteran Advocate	Coreena Conley Veterans Business Outreach Center
Women in Business Advocate	Laura Yamanaka TeamCFO
Small Business Exporter of the Year	Marie Spaccarotella Ziello Labs
Small Business Journalist of the Year	Daniel Kehrer Business.com
Young Entrepreneur of the Year	Kyle Banfield Cool It Portable Air Conditioning
Family Owned Business of the Year	Noemi Prado Southwest Moulding
SBDC Service Center Excellence	Alex Vaughn, Director El Camino SBDC
Eisenhower Award for Excellence (Contracting)	Tom May, Manager NASA/JPL
SBA 7(a) Lender of the Year	Min Jung Kim NARA Bank
SBA Lender – Inner City Leadership	John Ju Pacific City Bank

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